

June 2003

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Recommended Citation

Editor (2003) "And They Were There -- Reports of Meetings -- North Carolina Serials Conference and FORO 2003," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 15: Iss. 3, Article 33.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.4132>

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Reports of Meetings — North Carolina Serials Conference and FORO 2003

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Vital Skills for Serialists, Today and Tomorrow
12th North Carolina Serials Conference,
April 3-4, 2003, Chapel Hill, NC.

Report by **Terry Hill** (Carolina Academic Library Associate,
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On April 3rd and 4th, North Carolina Central University's School of Library and Information Science sponsored the twelfth North Carolina Serials Conference. The conference was held at the William and Ida Friday Continuing Education Center in Chapel Hill, NC. This year's conference theme was *Vital Skills for Serialists, Today and Tomorrow*. Evelyn Council of Fayetteville State University and Benjamin F. Speller of North Carolina Central University's School of Library and Information Science extended the welcome to the conference and introduced the keynote speakers.

The conference consisted of two keynote sessions. The first session's speakers were **Carol Avery Nicholson**, current president of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), and **Eleanor Cook**, current president of the North American Serials Interest Group (NASIG). The topic for this keynote session was, *Leaders and Mentors: Giving Back to the Profession*.

Nicholson's address, *Leadership and the Nimble Organization: Vital Skills for Success*, covered three areas she views as vital for today's Serialist. The three vital areas are knowledge, trust, and nimbleness. According to **Nicholson**, knowledge is the fundamental component of effective leadership. Today's Serialist must have extensive knowledge of the publishing industry, the variety of formats and languages materials are available in, and publication patterns to name a few. Trust was offered as the essential ingredient to gaining support from the numerous parties involved in the area of Serials. **Nicholson** states that we must gain trust from our patrons, vendors, and colleagues. This will result in a more productive working relationship with vendors and greater support from colleagues.

The ability to be nimble may be the most crucial of the three areas. It requires an organization or a librarian to think about accomplishing goals and to focus on the right goals at the appropriate time and for the right reasons. **Nicholson** stated that a nimble person or organization should remain in an unending growth and renewal mode, be proactive about change, but not to overextend our resources.

Eleanor Cook's presentation dealt with mentoring in the more traditional sense. Due to the complexity of Serials work set forth by **Nicholson**, **Cook** sees a need for mentors in this area of librarianship. Her presentation was based on two types of mentors, natural and planned. Natural mentoring occurs through informal relationships while planned mentoring occurs through formal programs. Although there is a need for mentors, **Cook** stated that not everyone can be an effective mentor.

Becoming involved in the profession is a way for librarians, paraprofessional staff, and students to connect with colleagues to find a mentor or mentee. The remainder of **Cook's** presentation familiarized the audience with local, state, and national level organizations that offer opportunities to become more involved in our profession.

The second keynote session was hosted by **Regina Reynolds**, head of the National Serials Data Program. **Reynolds's** speech was entitled, *Cataloging:*



The Good, The Bad and The Ugly Revisited. Some of the ideas that were discussed were the future of cataloging and the competition it faces from new ways of organizing information. Changing cataloging standards and taking advantage of new technologies was also discussed. One prevailing theme from this session was the need to catalog items based on what they are versus what the item says it is. This need may be attributed to the broad range of formats materials are available in and the fading of boundaries between disciplines.

During the first morning of the conference I attended two of the four concurrent sessions. The first session I attended was *Effective Communication: Translating Requests into Service*. This session was hosted by **Leslie Covington** from EBSCO Information Services and **Ralph Kaplan** from NC LIVE. The session explored important issues library employees need to know when communicating with vendor help desk staff. **Leslie** offered tips on what information is needed by help desk staff to better serve costumers when they call for service on their accounts. **Ralph Kaplan** discussed the challenges of his job as Systems Librarian for NC LIVE. In this role, he is responsible for the maintenance of lists for NC LIVE databases and electronic books. One of his main challenges is keeping up with the constant change that occurs with databases as a result of contractual agreements with publishers.

The *Accidental Serialists: Recruiting for the Future* was the second session I attended. This session was hosted by **Nancy Newsome** of Western Carolina University, **Phyllis Garriss** of North Carolina State University, **Julianna Harris** of UNC-Chapel Hill, and **Jessica Rubis** of North Carolina Central University. The growing need for Serials Librarianship has facilitated the need to find out the reasons Serials Librarianship is chosen or past over for other careers in the librarianship. This panel was composed of a librarian, a paraprofessional, and two graduate students. The graduate students offered a unique perspective to the panel, especially since one has decided to pursue Serials Librarianship.

During the afternoon session, I attended a round table discussion on *Strategies for Managing a Serials Cancellation Review* hosted by **Greg Raschke** from North Carolina State University. Participants discussed the different ways their institutions have dealt with budget cuts and the resulting cancellations of subscriptions. There was a consensus that we need to be proactive so we are not caught off guard when budgets are cut. This could be accomplished by on-going reviews and rankings of titles. If we operate in anticipation of budget cuts versus reacting to them, we will be prepared with a list of titles that could be included in an initial cut.

Friday morning's schedule consisted of three group sessions. The first was a panel discussion entitled *Linking to Full Text*. The panel consisted of **Adam Chesler** from Ingenta, **Jenny Walker** from Ex Libris, **Mike Phillips** from Wiley InterScience, **Tim Bucknall** from UNC-Greensboro, and **Nancy Gibbs** from Duke University. The second session, *Pay for View: Paying for Full Text* was conducted by **Beth Bernhardt**, Electronic Journals/Document Delivery Librarian at UNC-Greensboro. In the final session of the conference, **Paolo Mangiafico** from Duke University addressed archiving issues in his presentation, *Digital Libraries in the Long Now: Creating Archives for Digital Scholarship*.

My attendance at this conference required me to wear many hats. I am a graduate student, first time attendee, and potential Serialists. Although I am not new to the "library business" I have only been working in Serials as a graduate assistant since August 2002. As my Serials colleagues know, Serials are very complex and are in a constant state of change. This is the reason often given for why Serials Librarianship is not an attractive career path. I challenge this assumption.

I believe the challenges Serialists face is a characteristic that would attract people who are looking for a challenging career. It is the negativity we place on the complexity of Serials that is a turn off for many. As I consider my career path, I must make an effort on a daily basis to remember the purpose of my work. Whether in department meetings or state-wide conferences, it has been my experience that too much emphasis is given to the problems and not

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would change we may be able to worry less about recruitment and more about ways to continually improve our work.

The nature of Serials Librarianship and often the location in which it takes place within the library separates us from the public. Although we are not in public services, we must remember who we are here to serve. The ordering, cataloging, check-in and claiming are all an effort to make sure our patrons have the materials they need. As the vehicle of scholarly communication, journals and access to journals is of the utmost importance to patrons of the library. We should feel a great amount of accomplishment considering the obstacles we must overcome to provide access to a broad range of material.

Our keynote address focused on mentoring to bring new graduates into the profession. There is a need to mentor students, but there is also a need to mentor Library Science programs. The ball has been dropped on their end in regards to producing Librarians in critical areas such as Serials. Currently there are not any Serials related classes offered in my library school and it is possible that I will finish a two year program without one being offered. I have worked in many areas of the library in paraprofessional and student assistant positions, but my graduate assistantship has been my first experience with Serials. If I had not been placed in the Serials department, I would complete my library degree without any knowledge of this area of librarianship.

We must be proactive in our relationships with publishers and vendors. Their purpose is to increase their profits and as long as we are reacting to their strategic plans to increase prices, we will always operate in crisis mode. By acting strategically and being proactive in managing our Serials reviews, we can be certain to provide the best service to our patrons. After all, that is why we are here.

As we continue our work and prepare for next year's conference, it should be our goal to try to implement at least one of the many ideas discussed at the conference. We are very fortunate to have colleagues who are willing to share their time and expertise to try to improve the way we think about and carry out our work. It is up to us to make the most of it.

Freedom Beyond Borders: Information Networking in Action
2003 Transborder Library Forum
March 28-30, 2003, College Station, Texas

Report by **Elizabeth N. Steinhagen** (University of New Mexico)
and **Christine Mueller** (University of New Mexico)

March 28 through 30 of this year saw the gathering of about 100 librarians from Mexican and U.S. border states in College Station, Texas, where library personnel at **Texas A&M University (TAMU)** enthusiastically hosted the **2003 Transborder Library Forum** on campus. Since last year's Forum had to be cancelled, this event was the 12th of the annual gatherings of interested Mexican and U.S. librarians, which had its beginnings in Arizona in 1991. Since the first informal meetings in which a reduced number of professionals participated, attendance has grown considerably over the years and a great diversity of programs and sessions have allowed librarians from the academic, public, scholastic and specialized sectors to discuss their specific needs and projects of interest. Simultaneous translation at these events provided all attendees the opportunity to participate actively by eliminating linguistic barriers. This special assistance also proved to be quite rewarding at the recent **FORO** where a highly competent professional team was brought in from Houston to provide interpretation at all sessions for non-bilingual participants.

FORO, the **Transborder Library Forum**, is a volunteer organization that works to provide a venue for the cooperative exchange of ideas and discussions of experiences and efforts concerning the provision of library services in the bi-national border regions between, mainly, the U.S. and Mexico, and Canada. The objectives of the **FORO** include, among others,

- strengthening links between librarians interested in building information bridges along international borders;
- planning and implementing cooperative projects between libraries across geographic borders;

- facilitating the development of resource networks beyond library borders;
- introducing librarians to the most recent commercial library products and services;
- sharing cultural heritage.

Since the first **FORO** in 1991, when a small group of librarians from Sonora and Arizona met to explore shared interests, the domain of global information access has undergone revolutionary transformations. Technological innovations of the past decade have afforded us opportunities to instantly transcend many personal, geopolitical, cultural and ideological "borders" without leaving our libraries, even as borders have taken on new meanings in a world changed by the events of 2001. The **FORO 2003** theme, **"Freedom Beyond Borders: Information Networking in Action,"** was a new challenge issued to participants to explore and celebrate the ways in which information professionals in border regions can further stimulate cooperative ventures and solve common problems by strengthening collegial relationships and using innovative technologies.

As in the past, the **FORO** program, designed to highlight the overall theme, was very diverse and offered multiple options. It included workshops, round tables, formal and informal presentations on a large number of topics, such as cataloging, maps and their management, interlibrary loan and reference services, local and Texas history, and the preservation of cultural heritage. Several Mexican colleagues delivered papers, with the President of the **Mexican Library Association (AMBAC)**, **Dr. Felipe Filiberto Martinez**, and others representing libraries from several Mexican states such as Chihuahua, Nuevo Leon, Mexico City, San Luis Potosí, Sinaloa, Sonora, Veracruz, etc. The traditional Presidents' Panel also included **Dr. William Fisher**, SLA President, **Dr. Barry Bishop** of TLA, the **Texas Library Association**, and **Dr. Fred Heath**, Dean of Texas A&M libraries and President 2002-2003 of the **Association of Research Libraries (ARL)**.

The majority of the attendees were from academic libraries, thus the topics discussed were mainly related to their interests, but still from the perspective of improving services to diverse groups of users. Thus, for example, the sessions on bibliographic control of serials included presentations on the **CONSER** program, by **Jean Hiron**, **CONSER** Coordinator at the **Library of Congress**, on the **SERIUNAM**, a Mexican serials union catalog, on the **Mexican National Periodicals Library**, and on **RESBIUC**, a growing Northern Mexico cooperative serials project headquartered at the **Universidad Autonoma de San Luis Potosí**. A roundtable on issues associated with the bibliographic control of multilingual cataloging records in a joint international utility also drew a large number of participants, both from U.S. and Mexican libraries.

Other sessions covered the improvement of services through consortium building and the **LibQUAL** program; librarians as teachers and the potential innovations for the 21st century. Also included were presentations on preserving our cultural heritage through technology, with a discussion of the microfilming project of Mexican newspapers at the **Benson Latin American Collection (UT-Austin)** and the oral history project, called "Tejano Voices," at **UT-Arlington**. Some specialized presentations were on law and business resources on both sides of the border and on **MEDLINE** in Spanish, as well as on maps and GIS resources and information systems for libraries, with specific data for Texas and Mexico. International involvement for librarians, always of interest to participants, was explored and diverse options presented; and progress of the border ILL initiative was also highlighted.

In all, the tightly scheduled two and a half days of this **FORO** had a great number of presentations, both in English and in Spanish, covering a variety of topics, in addition to the plenary sessions, receptions and other activities that allowed for just the right mix of social and professional interactions. The participants expressed the hope that these meetings will be continued, with the next one perhaps held in Mexico and reverting after that back to "our side" of the border.

This year's attendees again expressed their gratitude to the hosts for the hospitality and friendship encountered everywhere and, especially, for hosting this event in spite of past financial constraints. All "Foristas" enjoy the informality and the dynamic but at the same time relaxed, atmosphere and recognize that continuity is still very important to all of us interested in maintaining transborder communications and connections as our world continues to shrink. 